

SMELT WORKING GROUP  
Thursday, March 4, 2010

**Recommendation for March 4, 2010:**

**The Smelt Working Group recommends that if the concern level is reached OR three adult delta smelt are taken in salvage in a single day, then adjust OMR flows to no more negative than -2000 cfs. This recommendation is based upon the proximity to the concern level and the taking of pre-spawning females at the export facilities.**

**Background:**

The SWG met today via conference call to discuss potential means for addressing elevated adult salvage, should it become necessary. Since February 28, two delta smelt had been salvaged at the CVP and two had been salvaged from the SWP on March 1 (expanded to 16 total), one delta smelt had been salvaged at the CVP on March 2 (expanded to four), and one delta smelt had been taken at the SWP on March 3 (expanded to four). The seasonal expanded cumulative salvage of adults for both Projects as of March 3 was 72. The adult concern level is 92 and the re-initiation level is 123.

There was no new survey data to discuss. Smelt Larval Survey #5 was completed on Tuesday but data will not be available before Monday. Spring Kodiak Trawl survey #3 will begin on March 8 and the 20-mm Survey will begin on March 15. The distribution from SKT #2 indicated that delta smelt occurred in the Montezuma Slough area. This could indicate that more movement of adults into the Delta may occur, potentially putting them at risk of entrainment, or that those smelt will spawn in the Marsh.

In the Delta, the SWP and the CVP are each exporting about 4200 cfs. The Sacramento River is flowing at about 29,000 cfs and the San Joaquin River is flowing at about 3900 cfs. The San Joaquin is expected to drop over the next few days due to reduced inflows and reduced releases from Goodwin, and is expected to be flowing at about 3000 cfs on Monday. The Projects are operating to meet an OMR of -5000 cfs. OMR is at about -4000 cfs on the five-day average and about -4700 cfs on the fourteen-day average. Delta outflow is at about 29,700 cfs and X<sub>2</sub> is at 63 km (Roe Island).

**Discussion:**

The Working Group did not have an immediate concern regarding larval salvage. However, if adult salvage were to continue through the weekend at the present rate of one to two fish per day, salvage could exceed the concern level of 92, and potentially approach the incidental take limit of 123 fish. The Working Group also reiterated that recently salvaged fish have exhibited sexual maturity, which suggests that spawning is either in progress or imminent.

The Working Group noted that even with the five-day OMR at about -4000 cfs, adult delta smelt are still being taken at the export facilities. Salvage has continued to occur even as OMR has

varied from about -3500 cfs to about -5000 cfs. An OMR of -2000 cfs would be expected to avoid or minimize further salvage of adults.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, March 8, 2010 at 10 AM